

Senate Committee for Agriculture and Veterans Affairs  
State Capitol  
600 East Boulevard Avenue  
Bismarck, ND 58505

February 3, 2025

Dear Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to Senate Bill 2343 in its current form and to urge you to either amend or reject it. As a small-scale, hobbyist beekeeper in North Dakota, I am deeply concerned about the unintended consequences this legislation would have on individuals like me and others in our state who engage in beekeeping for personal and community benefit.

Specifically, the bill's proposed restriction prohibiting beekeeping within a half-mile of a state or federal roadway disproportionately affects small-scale and hobbyist beekeepers. Unlike large commercial apiaries, which may have the resources to relocate their operations, many of us do not have alternative sites available. In my case, there are no viable options to relocate my hives should this bill become law. A fellow beekeeper in the Oakes area would likewise be negatively impacted, as his hives are currently situated within the proposed setback limits.

This legislation does not just affect beekeepers; it also undermines the values of self-reliance and agricultural sustainability that are central to North Dakota's identity. Many North Dakotans take pride in raising their own food, including honey, and beekeeping plays a vital role in local ecosystems and small-town economies. While small-scale beekeepers like me may not significantly impact the state's overall honey production, we provide an essential resource to our communities and contribute to local biodiversity.

Furthermore, this bill would have an especially detrimental effect on young and aspiring beekeepers. My ten-year-old son, who initiated our family's beekeeping journey through a 4-H project, would be devastated to see his hard work and dedication rendered impractical by restrictive legislation. By discouraging small-scale beekeeping, this bill risks discouraging the next generation of agricultural and environmental stewards.

I respectfully urge you to reconsider this bill's unintended consequences and explore alternative approaches that support both commercial and small-scale beekeepers. At the very least, I ask that you amend the legislation to provide reasonable exemptions for hobbyist beekeepers who do not have the means to relocate their hives.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter. I appreciate your commitment to supporting North Dakota's agricultural traditions and rural communities.

Sincerely,  
The Rev. Christopher W. Brademeyer  
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